

**Advance Policy Questions for General David D. McKiernan, USA
Nominee for Commander, North Atlantic Treaty Organization
International Security Assistance Force**

1. Duties

- 1a. What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Commander, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)?

Response: COMISAF is responsible for executing NATO's strategy in Afghanistan as delineated in OPLAN 10302. My responsibility is to ensure that ISAF accomplishes its objectives and meets the reporting requirements of SACEUR (as Commander of NATO Operations).

- 1b. What background and experience do you possess that you believe qualifies you to perform these duties?

Response: As a US General Officer with multiple deployment and multinational experiences, I have been closely involved with or in command of NATO and Coalition military operations. I feel thoroughly qualified and prepared to lead this complex effort in Afghanistan.

- 1c. Do you believe that there are any steps that you need to take to enhance your expertise to perform the duties of the Commander, ISAF?

Response: Since nomination by the Secretary of Defense for this assignment, I have been able to take advantage of several opportunities to engage with key leaders and organizations that contribute to the campaign in Afghanistan. I will continue to do everything possible to prepare for this assignment in the two months to follow.

2. Relationships

Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Commander, ISAF, to the following:

- 2a. U.S. Secretary of Defense

Response: As a US Army General Officer, I would be required to ensure that the US Secretary of Defense is advised and informed on the progress of my operation in ISAF and any issues that need to be resolved from a US perspective. While I would be a NATO Commander who obviously has a NATO chain of command thru JFC Brunssum and then SHAPE, I also would be prepared to keep US Secretary of Defense familiar with appropriate operational issues.

2b. NATO Secretary General

Response: The relationship between the Commander, ISAF and the NATO Secretary General is an indirect one. As the senior international statesmen for the Alliance, he is responsible for promoting and directing the process of consultation and decision-making within the Alliance.

2c. NATO North Atlantic Council

Response: There is not a direct command relationship between the NATO North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the ISAF Commander. The NAC is the principal decision-making body within NATO. It is comprised of high-level national representatives (ambassadors, Defense Ministers, Foreign Ministers, and Heads of State and Government) from each member country that discuss policy or operational questions requiring collective decisions. The NAC provides guidance to SACEUR for all NATO military operations and SACEUR subsequently passes operational military direction to subordinate commands.

2d. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Response: The relationship between the Commander, ISAF and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is an indirect one. He is one of 26 NATO Chiefs of Defense (CHODs), who combine to form the NATO Military Committee, which serves as the senior military authority in NATO. The CHODs in the Military Committee are responsible for recommending to NATO's political authorities those measures considered necessary for the common defense of the NATO area and for the implementation of decisions regarding NATO's operations and missions.

2e. NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

Response: The relationship between the Commander, ISAF and NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, Europe is a chain of command one. SACEUR is one of NATO's two strategic commanders and is the head of Allied Command Operations (ACO). He is responsible to NATO's Military Committee, the highest military authority in NATO, for the command, planning and conduct of all NATO military operations. SACEUR also identifies forces required for the mission and requests those forces from NATO countries, as authorized by the North Atlantic Council and as directed by NATO's Military Committee. As COMISAF, I would report directly to JFC Brunssum (Land Component Commander under SACEUR for ISAF), who subsequently reports directly to SACEUR.

2f. NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Transformation

Response: Both NATO's Strategic Commanders, SACEUR and Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT), carry out roles and missions assigned to them by the North Atlantic Council or in some circumstances by NATO's Defense Planning Committee. SACEUR and SACT work together to ensure the transformation of NATO's military capabilities and necessary interoperability. As an operational commander in NATO, I will coordinate with SAC-T to ensure we are leveraging the capability of his staff and command to maximize the effectiveness of our training efforts and NATO operational capabilities in theater.

2g. NATO Military Committee

Response: There is not a direct command relationship between the NATO Military Committee and the ISAF Commander. The Military Committee coordinates military advice to the NAC on policy and strategy. As an operational commander in NATO I will ensure SHAPE has the best military advice possible.

2h. Commander, U.S. Central Command

Response: The Commander of United States Central Command exercises authority over US Forces assigned to Operation Enduring Freedom, including forces assigned to Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan. As the International Security Assistance Force operates within the U.S. Central Commander area of responsibility, it is essential that both commanders closely coordinate as necessary to accomplish assigned missions.

2i. Commander, Combined Joint Task Force 82, Afghanistan

Response: Operational control of forces assigned to ISAF is exercised through the Regional Commanders. The U.S. is the designated lead for Regional Command East, and as such, COMISAF exercises control over US forces assigned to RC East via Combined Joint Task Force-82. The 101st Airborne Division is currently transitioning with the 82nd Airborne Division and is expected to complete transfer of Authority (TOA) by 10 Apr 08.

2j. Commander, Combined Security Transition Command Afghanistan

Response: There is not a direct command relationship between CSTC-A commander and COMISAF. It is a coordinating relationship with CSTC-A which is a force provider to ISAF operations. The coordination of our efforts is absolutely critical to mutual success. CSTC-A is a force provider in the role of developing Afghan National Security Force capability. Our coordinating relationship will remain focused on ensuring that well trained and equipped Afghan security forces are produced, sustained and provided to the Afghan people.

2k. United Nations Special Representative in Afghanistan

Response: There is not a direct command relationship between the UN SRSG and Commander, ISAF; however, productive coordination is essential. The ISAF Commander must ensure that ISAF operations are creating necessary security and working in conjunction with international organizations toward necessary development and reconstruction. My relationship with the UN SRSG will focus on developing and implementing comprehensive regional and national strategies to benefit the Afghan government and its people.

2l. U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan

Response: There is not a direct command relationship between the US Ambassador and Commander, ISAF but the requirement for close coordination and synchronization of activities is critical. The ISAF Commander and US Ambassador cooperate on the development and implementation of regional and national strategy in Afghanistan and I will work to ensure the effectiveness of that relationship.

3. Major Challenges

3a. In your view, what are the major challenges and problems you would confront if confirmed as the next Commander, ISAF?

Response: Under-resourcing and constrained forces confront the Commander today and I anticipate facing the same challenges in my initial months as COMISAF. Coherency among the many international and interagency actors is also a primary concern that is being addressed most notably with the recent nomination of the Senior Representative to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ambassador Kai Eide. Additionally, the security situation in Afghanistan is directly linked to security conditions in Pakistan.

3b. If confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges and problems?

Response: Fully resourcing military requirements and removing remaining caveats that constrain effectiveness will be a major focus. It is critical for ISAF to maximize its contribution to Afghanistan's ability to provide and maintain a secure environment with the forces and resources provided, despite any known shortfalls. As for coherency, we must address the need for unity of effort through organizational structure, coordinated planning, responsive resourcing, useful measures of success and transparency among the many national and international actors. I will also strive to improve mutual Afghan-Pakistan security challenges through such means as the Tripartite Commission.

4. Security Situation in Afghanistan

Recently-released independent reports have found that NATO is not achieving ISAF goals in Afghanistan and that the Taliban-led anti-government insurgency has grown over the last two years.

- 4a. What is your assessment of the security situation in Afghanistan and the nature, size, and scope of the anti-government insurgency?

Response: The security situation in Afghanistan is very complex, and reflects blurred linkages between criminal, corruption and insurgency based activities. While it is certainly true that violence, particularly suicide attacks, is up in comparison to the past several years, the raw statistics may not tell the entire story. Raw total measures of violence can increase when a greater portion of that violence is initiated by ISAF forces. The insurgency has suffered significant casualties in the past year, including numerous mid- and high-level Taliban leaders. The Taliban have been repeatedly defeated at the tactical level since operations in Afghanistan began, and are no closer to their strategic goal of recapturing Kandahar than they were two years ago. The current assessment of ISAF from the past year's activities is that aggressive ISAF actions in the spring of 2007 significantly degraded insurgent tempo and pre-empted operations. That will be repeated in 2008. Some analysts even assess that the Taliban adoption of suicide tactics is less of an indicator of success than an indicator of desperation and an opportunity for us to further alienate them from the people of Afghanistan. All said though, the insurgency is not on the verge of collapse, but we are not in danger of losing. Progress is being made, albeit at a pace that is not as great as we would like. The Afghan National Security Forces continue to improve capabilities and grow capacity, from having no national forces in 2001 to over 124,000 uniformed members today, and our allies continue to renew or increase their commitments to the mission.

- 4b. What changes, if any, do you believe are needed in ISAF operations to respond to the evolving insurgency threat?

Response: Despite all the outstanding work that has already been achieved in Afghanistan, there is still room for improvement. Counter-Insurgency doctrine tells us that one of the key elements of a successful COIN campaign is establishing a strong national security infrastructure and connecting the population to its government. A strong national force is critical to holding ground and denial of insurgent access to the population. The true long-term solution to the insurgency in Afghanistan is an Afghan one and it includes a strong national security force. Accordingly, one of our top priorities must be increasing and improving the Afghan National Security Force by focusing significant resources and effort on them. Creating a national army and police force is not a quick or easy process. The Afghan National Army continues to make huge gains in capability and is a respected by the Afghan population.

Progress in development of the Afghan National Police has not been as successful. There is significant momentum, but it will continue to require our highest priority. Police initiatives such as Focused District Development and plans to field over 2000 additional military personnel in a training role show promise.

Another cornerstone of a comprehensive COIN strategy is the necessity to protect the population. To this end, we should look closely at options for deploying additional brigade combat teams to Afghanistan, with a particular focus on the turbulent southern part of the country. The focus should be on traditional COIN operations, safeguarding key populations centers, securing roads and infrastructure, pursuing insurgents in their traditional sanctuaries and defeating them.

Finally, we must continue to focus on refining the strategy to ensure it is comprehensive, fully coordinated and understood by all the allied partners. ISAF, International Community and, most importantly, Afghan success will rely on development and good governance as well as security.

5. NATO ISAF Capabilities

- 5a. Do you believe that the current level of ISAF troops and equipment in Afghanistan is sufficient to carry out the mission? If not, what are the current shortfalls in troops and/or equipment required for the ISAF mission?

Response: ISAF certainly needs what was already stated as the CJSOR requirements and the forces need to have critical caveats removed. The under-resourced condition of ISAF affects its ability to control battle-space, maintain enduring effects and accelerate Afghan National Security Force development. Additionally, the ability to support the Government of Afghanistan in other than purely military lines of operation is limited. Among the specific shortfalls identified by the current ISAF commander are the unfilled requirement for three maneuver battalions, strategic reserves, fixed and rotary wing aviation, OMLTs and ETTs, Afghan Security Force trainers, Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance assets and Provincial Reconstruction Team assets.

- 5b. Do you believe our NATO allies should do more to eliminate the shortfalls in resources for the ISAF mission?

Response: Yes, but the ability to do more is limited by the willingness of the populations of some countries. We need to better make the case in these nations that this mission is important to their own strategic interests and the right thing to do for the people of Afghanistan.

- 5c. What is your assessment of the military capabilities of the NATO member states participating in ISAF, and of NATO ISAF as a whole? In what specific areas is more improvement needed? In what areas has there been the most progress?

Response: Capabilities vary widely by nation. I cannot yet give a complete personal observation or assessment as to either ISAF's current capabilities or its effectiveness until I have been on the ground for a while. However, I have seen that ISAF forces have conducted themselves very well in the most contested portions of the South and East. I am extremely impressed by ISAF performance and fully respect the sacrifices made and burdens borne by all by all throughout Afghanistan. As Commander of US Army Europe, I have assisted the training and preparation of many of the forces that make up ISAF and have seen great commitment and progress in the understanding of Counter-Insurgency Operations and the importance of Afghan National Security Force development. Let me be clear, however, in stating that these training and readiness efforts must continue and strengthen in the future.

6. National Caveats

- 6a. To what extent have national caveats limited the ISAF Commander's ability to deploy effectively the forces under his command in Afghanistan?

Response: I believe that COMISAF is definitely hampered by caveats. NATO forces possess superior mobility, sustainability and firepower. Caveats tend to negate some of those advantages and cause a level of command friction that makes planning and execution of flexible operations either very difficult or prone to enemy exploitation. Again, I can better assess the operational effects of caveats once I am on the ground.

- 6b. What do you believe should be done to encourage our NATO allies to remove national caveats?

Response: At the most fundamental level, the argument has to be made and accepted by the leadership and citizenry of each member nation that ISAF and Afghanistan are important; that the sacrifices required to defeat extremists, build a better life for the Afghans and safeguard our own security are worth it. Also, and very fundamental to this issue, national caveats usually increase the risk to ISAF service members and to mission success.

7. NATO Cohesion

Secretary Gates has expressed concern that NATO could become a "two-tiered alliance" composed of some countries who are willing to fight and others who are not. A recent independent report warns that if NATO is unable to produce the forces required to fight in the southern region of Afghanistan, NATO's credibility and cohesion will be harmed.

- 7a. Do you believe that NATO's credibility and cohesion are at stake in the conduct of the ISAF mission?

Response: NATO's credibility and cohesion in the 21st century could certainly be affected.

- 7b. How confident are you that NATO will be able to sustain its commitment to ISAF given the challenging security situation in Afghanistan?

Response: I am optimistic, despite the challenges. Several heads of state have confirmed commitment to NATO, ISAF and Afghanistan. The military leaders I talk to in Europe recognize the importance of the campaign. There have been recent reductions in the number and severity of caveats, certain new troop commitments are likely to be made and the results of the NATO summit in Bucharest could signal increased support. Effective strategic communications that inform our respective populations and political leadership on the stakes and value of the campaign in Afghanistan will also help. Credible success will also add to popular support.

8. Decoupling Iraq and Afghanistan

Secretary Gates reportedly indicated that among some European publics, opposition to the war in Iraq has contributed to a loss of support for the conflict in Afghanistan. The Afghanistan Study Group recommended the Administration "de-couple" Afghanistan and Iraq, in terms of funding and diplomacy, to enable more coherence and focus on Afghanistan.

- 8a. Do you believe that opposition to the war in Iraq has led to a loss of support among some European publics for the effort in Afghanistan?

Response: Yes, I believe that to be true in a number of European countries.

- 8b. Would you support de-coupling Afghanistan and Iraq to improve the focus on Afghanistan?

Response: Yes, internationally that would be helpful.

I believe that our efforts in Afghanistan would not stand to gain by "decoupling" it from Iraq in the U.S. defense budget process. Requirements for funding Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan are developed and approved independent of those funding requirements for Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the Department has consistently received the levels of funding it has requested for the mission in Afghanistan.

I also believe that our force capabilities and the process to provide trained and ready joint forces to both OIF and OEF (and other requirements) "couple" our commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq.

9. Counter Narcotics Strategy

A recent report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime finds that Afghanistan provides over 90% of the world's illicit opium and that poppy cultivation levels for the coming spring are expected to remain at or near last year's levels.

- 9a. Should ISAF have a drug interdiction mission in Afghanistan, including capturing drug lords and dismantling drug laboratories?

Response: No, I believe the responsibility should remain with Afghan and international law enforcement organizations. However, supporting Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) counter-narcotics programs is a validated ISAF task. ISAF should not conduct direct military action against narcotics producers, except for self defense or force protection reasons. I support General McNeil's recent commitment to support the GIRoA's counter-narcotics efforts within the means and capabilities of ISAF, specifically by helping to coordinate and synchronize the efforts of the Poppy Eradication Force (PEF), enabling support to Afghan Government and international law enforcement interdiction operations and employing a holistic provincial engagement approach in the context of counter-insurgency operations. (mirroring the US efforts in Nangahar as a model for success)

10. Training Mission in Afghanistan

Current plans call for training and equipping the Afghan National Army to a level of 80,000 and building the Afghan National Police to a level of 82,000 in the next few years. A recent independent report by the Afghanistan Study Group recommended that NATO could take over the mission of training the Afghan National Army, currently led by the United States, once NATO members have committed enough resources for this purpose.

- 10a. Do you believe that NATO should do more to assist in building the capacity of the Afghan Security Forces? Should NATO take over the training mission for the Afghan National Army?

Response: NATO is contributing to the training mission through the contribution of Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams and personnel assigned to the CSTC-A staff, but more could be done. I would not be opposed to NATO taking over the training mission in the future and suspect that the US would need to pledge continued resourcing of the program in order to gain NATO consensus and support for addition of this task. The key principle is unity of effort and there is a clear advantage to greater consolidation of the related missions of the current ISAF and CSTC-A.

- 10b. Should NATO allies play a greater role in providing these embedded training teams? If so, what should be done to encourage NATO allies to provide more of these teams?

Response: The U.S. Secretary of Defense and NATO civilian and military leadership have recently been very clear about desiring increased Allied contributions to the development of the Afghan National Security Forces in the form of Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams. OMLTS must, however, be totally trained and capable when they assume their mission. Until those requirements are sourced, I think NATO's primary focus should be on partnering forces with the ANA units in the field and working with these units in that way to improve their capabilities.

- 10c. What is your assessment of the Afghan National Police? What more can NATO do to improve the effectiveness of the police?

Response: Progress is being made in the development of the Afghan National Police, but police development is more problematic than military reform at this point. Current initiatives in rank and pay reform are promising as are the already mentioned approaches to Focused District Development. NATO countries could certainly assist by contributing more law enforcement expertise and training/sustainment resources. Ultimately, the Afghan National Police effect will only be as good as their credibility with the Afghan population.

11. Reconstruction Efforts and Provincial Reconstruction Teams

- 11a. What is your role as Commander, ISAF, in reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan?

Response: The ISAF commander's most important contribution to reconstruction is security. Besides personal engagement and coordination with Afghan and international agencies whose primary mission is reconstruction, the ISAF commander co-chairs, along with the Minister of Interior, the ambassador - minister-level PRT Executive Steering Committee. PRT support for elements of security sector reform, reconstruction and development are a major focus for ISAF. PRTs report to the ISAF Commander through the Regional Commands.

- 11b. What is your assessment of the performance of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan?

Response: Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan are an essential part of our development efforts in Afghanistan, and the primary means by which the ISAF acts to improve the capacity of the Government of Afghanistan to govern itself and develop essential quality of life services at the sub-national level. From what I have seen, I think they have been exceptionally effective overall.

- 11c. What improvements, if any, do you believe need to be made in the operations or coordination of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan?

Response: Each PRT is established and run by a Lead Nation, often with the assistance of one or more Partner Nations. So coherency will continue to be a challenge. The PRTs have only been under the command of COMISAF since the completion of NATO's four-stage geographic expansion in October 2006. Since that time, NATO has identified and initiated actions to maintain a positive momentum of change for PRTs in Afghanistan. Better integration between the PRTs and the ISAF maneuver unit commanders in the Province, and more importantly the Regional Commands, could produce the same coherence and success of the PRTs that is currently experienced by those in RC East. Funding mechanisms should also be reviewed. Instead of National Capitols financing the development, governance and security sector reform efforts of only "their PRTs", the funds for PRTs, or a portion thereof, could be pooled at the regional level so the Regional Commander's could allocate the funds in support of better-coordinated, regional counter-insurgency goals and objectives.

12. Local Governance and National Solidarity Program

A key component of the Afghan Government's development strategy is to strengthen local governance capacity. One program that contributes to enhancing development and empowering governance at the local level is the National Solidarity Program. This program, within the Afghanistan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, provides block grants directly to locally-elected Community Development Councils, which are responsible for identifying, planning and managing their own development projects. Funding for the National Solidarity Program comes from the World Bank/International Development Association, bilateral donors, and through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. According to its website, the National Solidarity Program has provided \$400 million in payments to 16,000 Community Development Councils, which have financed more than 30,600 subprojects to improve access to infrastructure, markets, and services.

- 12a. What is your understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the National Solidarity Program in Afghanistan?

Response: My understanding of the National Solidarity Program (NSP) is that it reflects the right intent from the bottom-up perspective to develop Afghan capacity. An important feature of the program is that it is Afghan-led. The rural development projects including irrigation, transportation, education, water supply and sanitation are all very important and consistent with ISAF objectives at the local level. Anything that contributes to Afghan government effectiveness, credibility and governance is positive. The NSP demonstrates clear advantages of the Afghan government in contrast to the destructive activity of the insurgency.

- 12b. Would you support expanding the National Solidarity Program as a means of building local governance and strengthening development?

Response: I see potential to an expansion of the program at this point so long as it retains the current principles, is nested in the overall strategy to develop Afghan capacity and does not become a program of inefficiency or corruption.

13. Civilian Casualties

Recent United Nations reports have found that there were over 1,500 civilian casualties in Afghanistan in 2007 and that almost half of the non-combatant casualties recorded by the United National Assistance Mission in Afghanistan were attributed to combat operations by Afghan national and international security forces.

- 13a. What measures have been taken to reduce the levels of civilian casualties resulting from combat operations by Afghan national and ISAF security forces?

Response: Avoiding civilian casualties is a priority within the Alliance, because of the moral and legal imperatives, but also because civilian casualties are counter to the principles of a successful counter-insurgency campaign.

- 13b. What more needs to be done to address the level of civilian casualties in Afghanistan?

Response: The U.S. and all Allies clearly consider minimizing civilian casualties an imperative. Any civilian casualties are a cause for concern, particularly in a COIN campaign where one of our preeminent tasks is to protect the population and engender their support for the Government. NATO needs to continue to take measures, in concert with the Afghan Government and Afghan Security Forces, to prevent any unnecessary casualties. Continued adherence to the law of armed conflict and strict application of proper procedures for attack aviation are also critical. We must continuously adapt operating procedures in accordance with changing conditions and enemy tactics to prevent unnecessary casualties. When tragic casualties do occur, we must conduct deliberate reviews and learn from them. Unfortunately, our foes do not share our moral values and have made it a general practice to occupy positions adjacent to or inside civilian structures, in an attempt to shield themselves from our forces and cause more civilian casualties. This makes the task more difficult, but no less important.

14. Safe Havens in Pakistan

The intelligence community assesses that Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas along the border with Afghanistan provide a safe haven for Al Qaeda and other extremists supporting the Taliban-led insurgency in Afghanistan.

- 14a. What can be done to prevent cross-border incursions by Al Qaeda and the Taliban from Pakistan into Afghanistan?

Response: Preventing cross-border incursions from Pakistan into Afghanistan requires close cooperation between Afghan, Pakistan and ISAF security forces so that we can interdict enemy elements as a team. Another imperative is improvement of Pakistan military and paramilitary force capability. US support to Pakistan's border area strategy including training and equipping Pakistan's Frontier Corps will help. Economic assistance to the people in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and a comprehensive counter-insurgency campaign on the Pakistan side would also help.

- 14b. What role, if any, should ISAF forces play in countering this threat?

Response: ISAF should play a significant role in the tri-partite program. ISAF could also act to facilitate and support effective Afghan border security management within the guidance of the NATO OPLAN.

- 14c. In your view, should the Pakistan Government be doing more to prevent these incursions?

Response: Yes, but they need the help of the others in the region and the international community to help work on the causes of instability in the FATA. In other words, incursions are only a part of the larger security challenges inside Pakistan.

15. Regional Diplomatic Strategy

Recent independent reports by the Atlantic Council and the Afghanistan Study Group call for adopting a regional approach to promoting stability in Afghanistan by bringing Afghanistan's neighbors together to discuss common issues.

- 15a. What is your understanding of NATO ISAF's position regarding establishing a regional process for engaging Afghanistan's neighbors on promoting security in Afghanistan?

Response: NATO, ISAF, and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan have an established process and strategy for engaging Afghanistan's neighbors to promote security in Afghanistan. This process and strategy, through constructive, cooperative, and productive dialogue, is designed to improve bilateral political and economic relations, enhance border security, and seek bilateral and multilateral solutions to combating the narcotics trade. There are numerous mechanisms through which this strategy, which is reviewed every six months by NATO, is executed:

- ISAF and NATO's Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) in Afghanistan engaging representatives from neighboring countries in Kabul;
- NATO's SCR visiting select embassies of neighboring states;
- ISAF Participation in the Tripartite Commission, comprised of senior Afghan, Pakistani, and Afghanistan/Pakistan border, and
- NATO-Afghan consultations with NATO's Central Asian Partners to discuss regional issues.

15b. If confirmed, would you support including Iran in such a position?

Response: Yes, from a purely military perspective, I would support including Iran in ISAF's regional process for engaging Afghanistan's neighbors on promoting security in Afghanistan. While it would be inappropriate for me to try to give an assessment on the current situation, I support any approved way for NATO to leverage the international community with the Government of Afghanistan to find more effective means to integrate Afghanistan's neighbors into the development and stabilization of Afghanistan. However, the decision regarding the extent and means through which NATO and ISAF will engage Iran is a political one that NATO's North Atlantic Council must make with input provided from NATO's military authorities. That said, I can tell you that currently, NATO and ISAF may engage Iranian officials in Kabul for tactical military coordination of border issues.

16. Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information.

16a. Do you agree, if confirmed for this high position, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress?

Response: Yes

16b. Do you agree, when asked, to give your personal views, even if those views differ from the Administration in power?

Response: Yes

16c. Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Commander, ISAF?

Response: Yes

16d. Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate Committees?

Response: Yes